



IMAGINE ACHIEVEMENTS

Celebrating its tenth anniversary, Imagine has served hundreds of individuals with a wide range of disabilities throughout Texas. Our mission is to create opportunity for people with disabilities to be respected and valued in their community.

- ▶ In December 2004, Imagine was awarded the *Self-Determination in Texas* statewide training and technical assistance grant from the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities. Key to the project success will be redesigning the public and private support system to enable people with disabilities to experience *freedom* to live meaningful lives, *authority* over the dollars available, *support* to organize resources, *responsibility* for the wise use of public dollars and *confirmation* of the role of the self-advocate in the newly designed system.
- ▶ Since 2000, Imagine West Texas has provided direct benefits planning assistance to over 300 people with disabilities and their families in a 94 county area (almost 1/4 of the geographic area of Texas!) Implementing Social Security Administration's *Benefits Planning, Assistance & Outreach* (BPAO) initiative, Imagine staff have supported people to complete their college education, remain employed with health insurance, or start their own businesses. West Texas human service and workforce agency personnel depend on Imagine staff to provide reliable advice to social security beneficiaries seeking a job.
- ▶ In partnership with the Virginia Commonwealth University, Imagine supports one of five national consultants for training and technical assistance on Social Security's Work Incentives. The expertise in Social Security issues, including health insurance, has elevated Imagine's role in creating new and innovative methods to allow people with disabilities to work in meaningful employment.
- ▶ In partnership with Portland State University, Imagine supports one of six national sites for *Career Journeys* - a mentoring project using the internet to link youth with disabilities who are seeking employment information, with adults with disabilities who have succeeded in the work world. Still in the formative stages, the project seeks to include people from all over the Houston and Gulf Coast region.
- ▶ Coordination of the *Plano Self Advocates*, a group of 48 people with mental retardation, and providing intensive planning and support services to 12 people with significant disabilities in the Dallas metropolitan area from June 2001 through May 2004. The project continues today through a partnership with LifePath.
- ▶ Working with The Arc of the Gulf Coast, *Imagine* completed *The Transition Toolkit* for students with disabilities and their parents. This project supports 15 students with significant disabilities seeking employment. This project also initiated '*Community Transitions*' partnership between Alvin ISD and the Alvin Community College, for students with severe cognitive disabilities from ages 18 - 22 to receive educational services on the Community College campus.
- ▶ Imagine supports individuals seeking employment through direct supports and coaching. Staff help create employment in typical jobs, achieve self-employment or guide people to resources. Working in collaboration with the Worksource Offices, Imagine assisted 283 people in three Gulf Coast counties—mostly mothers receiving public assistance—prepare for, get and keep jobs through *Imagine Works*.